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## England and the Catholic Reformation: the Peripheries Strike Back

**Abstract:** Although the Protestant Reformation has traditionally been the focus of research on early modern England, the last two decades have witnessed a rapid increase in scholarship on the experience of the country's Catholics. Questions surrounding the implementation of the Catholic Reformation in England have been central since the topic's inception as a subject of academic interest, and the field has more recently captured the attention of, amongst others, literary scholars, musicologists and those working on visual and material culture. This article is a position paper that argues early modern English Catholicism, though not doing away with all continuities from before the country's definitive break with Rome, was fully engaged with the global Catholic Reformation, both being influenced by it, but also impacting its progression. Whether through reading and writing, or more physical expressions of mission and reform, English Catholicism was a vital part of the wider Catholic Reformation.

**Keywords:** Catholic Reformation; England; Europe; exile; transnational; writing

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Tudor reform did not, despite the rhetoric of some of its protagonists, consign Catholicism to historical oblivion. Instead, populist suspicion of popery and the enduring presence of Catholics in England acted as serious engines of identity and state formation in England<sup>1</sup> during the time of the faith's official proscription, from the reign of Elizabeth I to Catholic emancipation in 1829. Though popular perceptions of Catholicism's premature death may still endure, the last two decades have seen major upheavals in the academic study of English Catholicism, as a growing number of scholars have recognized the importance of the subject both to national and global history. This burgeoning interest is indicated by the renaming of the journal *Recusant History* as *British Catholic History*, and the start of the biennial Early Modern British and Irish Catholicism conference organized by Durham University and the University of Notre Dame. Moreover, the archival riches of Church bodies, especially religious orders, have stimulated multiple research projects based on Catholic sources written in a non-confessional manner.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this article is to give a very brief overview of these recent historiographical developments and, perhaps, offer a pointer to how the scholarly trajectory could be continued. To achieve this, the article is split into three sections. The first involves the resurrection of a hoary old beast of a question that dates from the birth of the study of English Catholicism as an academic field roughly fifty years ago: namely, what did the Catholic Reformation look like for English Catholics? The second section will briefly highlight one specific area of the current boom in historiographical activity; that is, books and their circulation. Finally, it will be argued that one of the major defining characteristics of English Catholicism that is still regularly neglected by scholars, is the influence of its exile contingent. This will be framed in terms of recent discussion about the centre and peripheries in the Catholic Reformation, though with a slight but important caveat; when talking about the English Catholic experience – and the case can be made for the whole Tridentine enterprise – it would be more appropriate to talk of *centres* and peripheries, as the location of an exile institution had a major influence on the type of Catholic reform enacted, such as in Spanish or French territories.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Peter Lake, "Anti-Popery: the structure of a prejudice," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman, 1989), 72–106.

<sup>2</sup> For example, two projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Who Were the Nuns? (<https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/>) [hereafter WWTN] and the Monks in Motion (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/mim/>) projects [hereafter MIM].

## 1. Catholic reform in England

The first part of this article wades into an old argument but one never satisfactorily settled, namely that between John Bossy and Christopher Haigh surrounding the question of English Catholicism after the accession of King Henry VIII. Much of this scholarly debate centred around the question of continuity; namely, whether English Catholicism was a survivor of the past, the old religion, or whether English Catholics represented a newly minted collective after the break with Rome. For Haigh, the English Mission he implicitly imbues with the spirit of the Catholic Reformation, turned its back on the opportunities for continuity Catholicism, particularly in Lancashire, a county in the north-west of England. For Bossy, this cadre of committed spiritual warriors saved English Catholicism from slipping into generational conformity and disappearance. It may have been a rump community that remained or was even formed, but that it existed at all was a victory to be laid at the feet of Catholic Reformation missionary zeal.<sup>3</sup> Academic opinion currently sits somewhere between these two views, but there are several arguments to make in support of Bossy's opinion. The first point is perhaps an obvious one. General historical consensus highlights as a critical moment in the creation of an identifiably Catholic community the arrival of the Jesuits, Edmund Campion and Robert Persons, in 1580 and the subsequent adopted policy of recusancy (non-attendance at the state church) as the gold standard marker.<sup>4</sup> Yes, there may have been those who outwardly conformed to the state church before and after this, as well as a flexible, casuistical approach to individual cases where necessary, but this was the flagship policy, the chosen divider to create a separatist group. Pertinently, but frequently neglected in such discussions, is that this touchstone policy came directly with the imprimatur of those gathered for the Council of Trent, responding to a question about the legitimacy of attending Protestant state churches in England. In other words, it was the imposition of the Council of Trent and the Roman Church's will in giving a visible Catholic presence in England, the Roman Inquisition subsequently echoing the conclusion of the Council fathers.<sup>5</sup> As Michael Questier has observed, "the aspiration and purpose of the first seminary phase of English Romanism, on the evidence of its attitude to conformity, was one of radical change, not staid continuity".<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, there are some vital clues about contrasting intra-Catholic views in a well-known but strangely under-exploited text. In his autobiography, John Gerard, SJ, noted that the chaplain serving the Wiseman family at Braddocks in Essex, where he was sheltered, treated him and those of the English mission with suspicion. Philip Caraman translated Gerard's description of the Marian cleric as "one of those old priests who were always at odds with the

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<sup>3</sup> This debate was carried out in a series of publications, but the main arguments can be found in John Bossy, "The Character of English Catholicism," *Past and Present* 21 (1962): 39–59; John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975); Christopher Haigh, "The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation," *Past and Present* 93 (1981): 37–69; and Christopher Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th Series 31 (1981): 129–47.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the 'Public Sphere' in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context," *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000): 587–627.

<sup>5</sup> Ginevra Crosignani, Thomas M. McCoog, S.J. and Michael Questier, eds., *Recusancy and Conformity in Early Modern England: Manuscript and Printed Sources in Translation* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010), 9–25, 25–27.

<sup>6</sup> Michael C. Questier, "What happened to English Catholicism after the English Reformation?," *History* 85 (2000): 28–47 (38).

young men, especially the Jesuits whom they looked on as meddlesome innovators.”<sup>7</sup> This is an extremely revealing line. Firstly, it highlights the generational division between continuity and Tridentine-enthused Catholics.<sup>8</sup> Secondly and perhaps most pointedly, the term “meddlesome innovators” underlines that, to a priest from before Elizabeth’s accession, these “young men” were espousing something new, or, at least, not the tried and tested views of continuity Catholicism. On one level, this lends against recent re-evaluations of Mary I’s brief attempted counter-Reformation as the first testing ground for nascent Tridentine Catholicism,<sup>9</sup> but for the argument at hand, it shows that the first taste of Tridentine Catholicism in England was something of a jolt to religious traditionalists. Moreover, that it was deemed “meddlesome” is also instructive. In this case, the continuity Catholic cleric was perturbed by the Jesuit Gerard’s insistence on arranging the whole household – including the servants – around the practice of Catholicism. In other words, it was a thorough-going spiritual reformation to the whole life that Gerard was advocating. This was of huge impact in the relationship between the Catholic Reformation and England.

To take one particular individual, the English Benedictine monk, Augustine Baker, certainly considered a major change had taken place: looking back from the 1630s, he judged recusancy as proof of the initial success of the English missionary enterprise, plus described this early stage as a cleansing and purifying of Catholics because superstition had crept in before the English Protestant Reformation.<sup>10</sup> It is this zeal for spiritual reform – so often remarked upon as a similarity between separatist Catholics of the Catholic Reformation and Puritans – that Baker commends as a necessary requirement for the missionary monk: “the missioner whose soul is not free from the loue of the things of the world, can not auaille to cause another to putt out of his soule terrene loue, w<sup>ch</sup> he needeth to do that would be a true professor of the Faith in England.”<sup>11</sup> Without it, he maintains, some Catholics go through the signs of outward persecution but are corrupted by internal feelings, such as the church papists who protect their property by outwardly conforming rather than risk losing it all for their faith.<sup>12</sup> Equally, Baker explicitly links the English missionary enterprise with wider global Catholic reform, alluding to the efforts of Francis Xavier, as well as attempts to re-Catholicize parts of Germany, the Netherlands and France.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Philip Caraman, ed., *John Gerard: The Autobiography of an Elizabethan* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951), 29. Writing in the early 1950s, Caraman was seemingly prescient of how the changes of Vatican II would be interpreted.

<sup>8</sup> For recent work on generational difference within the English Reformation, see Norman L. Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Alison Shell, “‘Furor juvenilis’: Post-Reformation English Catholicism and exemplary youthful behaviour,” in *Catholics and the ‘Protestant Nation’: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England*, ed. Ethan Shagan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 185–206; Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age and Religious Change in England 1500–1700,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series 21 (2011): 93–121; Lucy Underwood, “Recusancy and the Rising Generation,” *Recusant History* 31 (2013): 511–33.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Ampleforth Abbey, MS 119 [hereafter “Baker, Part 2”], 5. For modern printed versions, partly printed in Augustine Baker, *A Treatise of the English Mission: The Second Part*, ed. John Clark (Salzburg: Institute für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2012), and the remaining printed in Hugh Connolly, ed., “Father Augustine Baker’s Treatise of the English Mission: The Historical Portion,” in *Memorials of Father Augustine Baker and other Documents Relating to the English Benedictines*, ed. Justin McCann and Hugh Connolly, Catholic Record Society, vol. 33 (London, 1933), 157–84.

<sup>11</sup> Baker, Part 2, 250–53.

<sup>12</sup> Baker, Part 2, 254–56.

<sup>13</sup> Downside Abbey, MS 26583 (Baker MS 27), 379; for modern printed version, see Augustine Baker, *A Treatise of the English Mission: The First Part*, ed. John Clark (Salzburg: Institute für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2011).

Another example is that of Margaret Clitherow, a Catholic laywoman executed in York in 1586. Peter Lake and Michael Questier have argued that the biography/martyrology of Clitherow, penned by her missionary cleric chaplain John Mush, was at least partly polemical, aimed at inculcating a culture of separatist recusancy in an identifiable Catholic community.<sup>14</sup> However, it also went further, operating as a guide to Catholic Reformation living. Ultimately, Clitherow's life, at least as presented by Mush, had this Catholic woman subverting all traditional orders: she refused to attend the Church so therefore undermined the state and, ultimately, prized her Catholicism above the loyalty owed to her husband who was left in ignorance of her subversive Catholic activities.<sup>15</sup> Notably, such endeavours were aimed at women, from the Jesuit Robert Southwell's *A Short Rule of Good Life*, published on a secret press in 1596/97 and designed as a guide to living as a Europeanized Catholic woman, to the tales of women rejecting the authority of their families – and particularly fathers – to fulfil their spiritual desire of entering religious life on the continent.<sup>16</sup> In short, this form of Catholicism was something new and all encompassing, subverting all traditional allegiances and making them subservient to the missionary spirit of the Catholic Reformation. This is not to argue that there was no continuity from before England's ultimately decisive break from Rome, but rather that these elements of continuity were adapted. To take an instructive modern example, it is like the liturgical and theological redirections that occurred after the twentieth century's Vatican II: Catholics knew what went before and linked to it while simultaneously experiencing something very different. To argue otherwise is to raise something of a false flag. Nor was England the only country on the peripheries of Catholic Europe to feel the shock of the new: as Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin has argued, like England, parts of the northern Balkans had also been cut off from the initial burst of Catholic reform and the continuity Catholics there received this reformed Catholicism with similar suspicion bordering on distaste.<sup>17</sup>

Naturally, all this means that there could be problems when applying the rules of Trent in England. For example, the Benedictine, Augustine Baker, recognized the difficulty of monks operating in a missionary territory such as England. Unlike in Catholic countries, "the case being as it is in England, that there is no legal meane to force his [a monk's] retourne, if he will proue disobedient & obstinate."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the Jesuits had genuine concerns about how to observe the Tridentine norms in England, the very nature of life on the Mission causing significant differences between English Jesuits and their European confrères. Difficulties in corresponding with superiors situated in mainland Europe meant that Jesuits on the English

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, "Margaret Clitherow, Catholic nonconformity, martyrology and the politics of religious change in Elizabethan England," *Past & Present* 185 (2004): 43–90; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (London: Continuum, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> John Mush, "A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow," in *The Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers, related by themselves*, vol. 3, ed. John Morris (London: Burns and Oates, 1877), 331–440.

<sup>16</sup> Susannah Monta, "Robert Southwell, SJ, *A Short Rule* ..., 1596/1597," in *Treasures of Ushaw College: Durham's Hidden Gem*, ed. James E. Kelly (London: Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers, 2015), 82–83; see for example, Isobel Grundy, "Women's History? Writings by English Nuns," in *Women, Writing, History, 1640–1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992), 126–38 (136). For recent scholarly developments on the role of women within the English mission, see Jennifer Binczewski, "Solitary Sparrows: Widowhood and the Catholic Community in Post-Reformation England, 1580–1630," PhD thesis, Washington State University (2017); Jennifer Binczewski, "Power in vulnerability: widows and priest holes in the early modern English Catholic community," *British Catholic History* 35 (2020): 1–24.

<sup>17</sup> Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe, 1592–1648: Centre and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 188, 193–94.

<sup>18</sup> Baker, Part 2, 145.

mission had to act before official assent could be granted.<sup>19</sup> The very nature of the mission meant that English Jesuits had to behave differently to their European counterparts, for example gaining dispensation from the Tridentine decrees by Pope Gregory XIII in order to publish books without details of the author, place and publisher so that they could run secret presses and wage a pamphlet war in England.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the English Jesuit practice of wearing lay attire even in mainland Europe rather than the traditional Jesuit soutane, as well as novel structures of management and bureaucracy, provoked regular bemusement and carping from Belgian Jesuits.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. A cyclical relationship

This characteristic of adaptation is perhaps most evident in a field currently experiencing much attention: the book trade, or more particularly, the spread of illicit books in England. New editions of pre-Reformation texts were circulated in England, though they were adapted for the novel working environment and prepared for a post-Council of Trent world. Eamon Duffy has argued that, after initially focussing on polemical material, the newly-minted seminary-trained missionary priests recognized that the old prayers had not gone through the required processes of Tridentine belt-tightening. This ultimately led to the publication of the first vernacular Tridentine primer in England, the *Manual of Prayers*, after 1575. He contends that the *Manual* played a major role in transferring the devotional Catholic Reformation into England, whilst also being deliberately aimed at an English Catholic audience.<sup>22</sup> Polemically, Susan Royal has ventured that English Catholics recycled ancient and medieval styles of anti-heresy writing to counter John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.<sup>23</sup> In mainland Europe, Jaime Goodrich has explored how medieval spirituality, particularly the contemplative writing of Julian of Norwich, was remoulded to serve religious life at the English Benedictine convent in Cambrai.<sup>24</sup> In other words, pre-Reformation texts remained fundamental components of the English Catholic Reformation experience, but they were adapted to convey that movement's message and made suitable for the particular condition of England's adherents to the Faith. On a wider scale, this Catholic Reformation process of adapting older elements to make them fit for purpose, as highlighted by Simon Ditchfield,<sup>25</sup> shows England as much a

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Victor Houlston, "Robert Persons's precarious correspondence," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014): 542–57.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., "'Guiding Souls to Goodness and Devotion': Clandestine Publications and the English Jesuit Mission," in *Publishing Subversive Texts in Elizabethan England and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, ed. Teresa Bela, Clarinda Calma, Jolanta Rzegocka (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 93–109.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas M. McCoog, SJ, "Seventeenth-century Visitations of the Transmarine Houses of the English Province," in *With Eyes and Ears Open: the Role of Visitors in the Society of Jesus*, ed. Thomas M. McCoog, SJ (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 96–125. See also Thomas M. McCoog, SJ, "And Touching Our Society": *Fashioning Jesuit Identity in Elizabethan England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2013), 197–259. For wider Jesuit adaptation in the Catholic Reformation, see Silvia Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Eamon Duffy, "Praying the Counter-Reformation," in *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation*, ed. James E. Kelly and Susan Royal (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 206–25.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Royal, "English Catholics and English Heretics: The Lollards and Anti-Heresy Writing in Early Modern England," in *Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Kelly and Royal, 122–41.

<sup>24</sup> Jaime Goodrich, "'Attend to Me': Julian of Norwich, Margaret Gascoigne and Textual Circulation among the Cambrai Benedictines," in *Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Kelly and Royal, 105–21.

<sup>25</sup> Simon Ditchfield, "Decentering the Catholic Reformation: Papacy and peoples in the early modern world," *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 101 (2010): 186–208. These adaptations included in approaches to lay devotions, such as Susannah Monta's exploration of poetic domestic liturgies: Susannah Monta, "John Austin's *Devotions*: Voicing Lyric, Voicing Prayer," in *Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Kelly and Royal, 226–45. Equally, it could mean seeking specific dispensations, like those sought by the English Jesuits: see n. 21, 22 above.

part of this phenomenon as the “old” Tridentine heartlands or the exciting “new” world being Catholicized.

Simultaneously, the writings of major Catholic Reformation figures, from the likes of Luis de Granada, OP, to the Jesuits Peter Canisius and Robert Bellarmine, were also prepared for, and circulated amongst, an English Catholic audience.<sup>26</sup> These works and translations into the vernacular were vital parts “of the parallel programmes of evangelical conversion and moral renewal” common to both sides of the reformation debate, and in this case show the “internationalism of the British Counter-Reformation and its book trade.”<sup>27</sup> These “domme preachers” of Luis de Granada’s description featured significantly in English lay Catholic libraries, as argued by Earle Havens, and could even find their way into the remotest of corners, as revealed by Hannah Thomas’ work on the Jesuit missionary library at the Cwm on the border between England and Wales.<sup>28</sup>

Equally, it is worth noting that England’s Catholics captured the imagination of mainland European writers, both as subjects – such as in Spain, where Diego de Yepes and Pedro de Ribadeniyra were amongst the more notable authors of works about the persecution in England<sup>29</sup> – but also with their own efforts. For example, Thomas Stapleton’s *Promptuarium Morale* was designed for the lecture theatre, a defence of the Catholic faith for the Catholic Reformation academy. In contrast, his *Promptuarium Catholicum* went for the Protestant jugular, relentlessly pursuing its opponents as part of the early modern war of words, the work providing sermon texts for parish clergy. This was English manufactured ammunition for the Catholic clergy of Catholic Reformation Europe, the liturgical year acting as Stapleton’s chosen battlefield.<sup>30</sup> Such output had pastoral and polemical purposes, marking the juncture between devotion, scholarship and controversy in the Catholic Reformation.

Another example is the English Benedictine monk, Anthony Batt of St Laurence’s, Dieulouard. More commonly a translator of texts into English, in 1640 a French translation of his *Thesaurus absconditus in Agro Dominico inventus*, was published, allowing him to reach an audience of French *devotes*, unlike many English Catholic writers of the period.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “Wholesome Milk and Strong Meat: Peter Canisius’s catechisms and the conversion of Protestant Britain,” *British Catholic History* 32 (2015): 293–314; Earle Havens and Elizabeth Patton, “Underground Networks, Prisons and the Circulation of Counter-Reformation Books in Elizabethan England,” in *Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Kelly and Royal, 165–88.

<sup>27</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “Luis De Granada’s Mission to Protestant England: Translating the Devotional Literature of the Spanish Counter-Reformation,” in *Publishing Subversive Texts*, ed. Bela, Calma, Rzegocka, 129–54 (130–31).

<sup>28</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “‘Domme Preachers’? Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print,” *Past and Present* 168 (2000): 72–123; Hannah Thomas, “The Society of Jesus in Wales, c. 1600–1679: Rediscovering the Cwm Jesuit Library at Hereford Cathedral,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014): 572–88; Hannah Thomas, “‘Books which are necessary for them’: Reconstructing a Jesuit Missionary Library in Wales and the English Borderlands, ca. 1600–1679,” in *Publishing Subversive Texts*, ed. Bela, Calma, Rzegocka, 110–28; Earle Havens, “Lay Catholic Book Ownership and International Catholicism in Elizabethan England,” in *Publishing Subversive Texts*, ed. Bela, Calma, Rzegocka, 217–62.

<sup>29</sup> Diego de Yepes, *Historia Particular de la Persecucion de Inglaterra* (Madrid, 1599); Spencer J. Weinreich, ed. Pedro de Ribadeneyra’s ‘*Ecclesiastical History of the Schism of the Kingdom of England*’: *A Spanish Jesuit’s History of the English Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). On the impact in Spain of English Catholic writing about the persecution, see Ana Saez-Hidalgo, “English Recusant Controversy in Spanish Print Culture: Dissemination, Popularisation, Fictionalisation,” in *Forming Catholic Communities: Irish, Scots and English College Networks in Europe, 1568–1918*, ed. Liam Chambers and Thomas O’Connor (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 201–31. For the influence in Europe of English Catholic experiences of martyrdom in an earlier period of reformation, see Anne Dillon, *Michelangelo and the English Martyrs* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> William Sheils, “The Gospel, Liturgy and Controversy in the 1590s: Thomas Stapleton’s *Promptuaria*,” in *Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Kelly and Royal, 189–205; see also William Sheils, “Polemic as Piety: Thomas Stapleton’s *Tres Thomae* and Catholic Controversy in the 1580s,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60 (2009): 74–94.

<sup>31</sup> MIM, 197.



Alternatively, there has recently been a glut of scholarship attesting to the influence of Edmund Campion's work, in particular his *Rationes Decem*, in central Europe.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, as Gerard Kilroy has attested, that book had its roots in Campion's experience of the Catholic Reformation in the continental mainland.<sup>33</sup> As such, it represents the cyclical relationship between England and the Catholic Reformation; a book formed by ideas in Catholic Europe, penned and distributed on a secret press in England, going through various editions back in mainland Europe to influence the advance of the Catholic Reformation there.

### 3. English Catholicism: Centres and peripheries

This leads to my final area of discussion: mainland Europe. Alexandra Walsham's recent collection of a decade's worth of essays, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain*, despite its frequent excellence, had a significant blind spot: namely, the role of the English Catholic diaspora.<sup>34</sup> For a collection about the Catholic Reformation, there is surprisingly little specifically on the exile communities. Yet this runs the risk of treating England in isolation. It was here, at these institutions in mainland Europe, that English Catholic children were educated, where Catholic women religious lived their lives, where the clergy – who are frequently cited as the vehicle for the transfer of Catholic Reformation ideas to England – were formed. Ultimately, the institutions of this diaspora were the engine room in the process of bringing the Catholic Reformation to Protestant Britain. Therefore, if scholars want to understand the Catholic Reformation in England, then they need to know about the commitment of these institutions and individuals to those reforms.

Largely because they have been better at preserving and promoting their archives and histories, this would now usually lead to a discussion of Jesuit activity in England. Indeed, there is a burgeoning amount of important historiography on this very topic.<sup>35</sup> So, in order to suggest the English Catholic experience was spread widely, English Benedictine monks will form the first case study. Taking one particular monk, Augustine Bradshaw, he was a serial reformer. Bradshaw was the great architect of the re-founding of English Benedictine monasticism, having a significant hand in the starting of both St Gregory's at Douai and St Laurence's at Dieulouard in the opening decade of the seventeenth century. His observance of the Rule was known to be strict and may have been at least partly behind his replacement as prior of St Gregory's. Travelling back from Spain around 1613, Bradshaw was approached by Cardinal Richelieu's ally, the Capuchin Joseph du Tremblay, who sought the English

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Svorad Zavaršky, "Invisible Threads of Divine Providence: The British Links in and of the Polemical Theology of Martinus Szent-Ivany, S.J. (1633–1705)," in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange Between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580–1789: 'The World is our House'?*, ed. James E. Kelly and Hannah Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 210–34; Clarinda Calma, "Edmund Campion's Prague Homilies: The *Concionale ex concionibus a R.P. Edmundo Campiano*," in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange Between England and Mainland Europe*, ed. Kelly and Thomas, 43–66; Clarinda Calma, "Communicating Across Communities: Explication in Gaspar Wilkowski's Polish Translation of Edmund Campion's *Rationes Decem*," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014): 589–606.

<sup>33</sup> Gerard Kilroy, "A Cosmopolitan Book: Edmund Campion's *Rationes Decem*," in *Publishing Subversive Texts*, ed. Bela, Calma, Rzegocka, 185–216. See also his *Edmund Campion: A Scholarly Life* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Admittedly, the author has been one of those to contribute to this historiography. Apart from examples cited elsewhere in this article, see Victor Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Thomas M. McCoog, SJ, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1589–1597: Building the Faith of Saint Peter upon the King of Spain's Monarchy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Thomas M. McCoog, SJ, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1598–1606: "Lest Our Lamp Be Entirely Extinguished"* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Robert E. Scully, SJ, *Into the Lion's Den: The Jesuit Mission in Elizabethan England and Wales, 1580–1603* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2011).



Benedictine's help in reforming certain abbeys. The French Capuchin was at the time working with the Abbess of Fontevault, Louise de Bourbon, who was intent on reforming monastic obedience in the dual-houses that formed the order under her authority. Du Tremblay recommended Bradshaw "as one full of zeal, sanctity, ability, and energy". Thus, the English Benedictine embarked on his work that autumn and proved so successful that he was employed as a reformer and restorer of monastic discipline in a series of other houses, including at the abbeys at Remiremont and Poitiers. He died in 1618 at the Cluniac monastery in Longueville, near Rouen, which he had been sent to reform two years before. It is hardly hyperbolic that the English monk Francis Waldegrave described Bradshaw in his grave epitaph as "the happy and prosperous repairer of Monastic discipline".<sup>36</sup> Bradshaw was not a one-off. In 1611, the bishop of St Malo was so impressed by the "learning and piety" of the English monks that he encouraged them to set up a base there; they duly did, forming two Benedictine nunneries at the request of the bishop in the meantime.<sup>37</sup> Having been officially exiled from England after several years on the mission, Dunstan Everard of St Malo sought to reform the Abbey of St Nicholas aux Bois, near Amiens, in 1633, with Paul Robinson of St Laurence's, Dieulouard, sent to assist him. The president of the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC), Leander Jones, instructed the prior of St Malo, Deodatus L'Angevin, to support Everard in this endeavour.<sup>38</sup> Overlapping with part of his time as EBC president, Clement Reyner was engaged in the reform of the abbey of St Peter's, Blandigny, near Ghent, from 1633 to 1641. He was invited to become its abbot but declined, agreeing to manage it till a suitable candidate could be found.<sup>39</sup> Perceived as both leaders of the Tridentine reform of monastic discipline in France and reform of the different branches of the Benedictines, particularly from the 1620s onwards, monks of the EBC reportedly had to excuse themselves from this reforming work, citing that their vocation was instead the English Mission.<sup>40</sup> There is much scholarly research to be carried out on the role of the exile communities within attempts at Catholic reform in mainland Europe, and it is the next intended study of the author, yet what may be happening here is the English Benedictines playing an active role in the re-Catholicization of France after the Wars of Religion. Indeed, similar can be seen in Germany, where the English monks took advantage of the destruction of the Thirty Years War to establish themselves as vehicles of reform in Lamspringe, near Hildesheim, Germany, something which the English Jesuits also attempted.<sup>41</sup> The English monks were not the only people from Catholic Europe's peripheries to do this; the Irish Franciscans set up a new foundation dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Prague in 1631, not only to train their own missionaries, but because the Holy Roman Emperor and the Cardinal Archbishop of Prague both saw them as a vital means of re-Catholicizing Bohemia.<sup>42</sup> Apparently, the experience of those on the peripheries was seen as useful for efforts at Catholic reform across mainland Europe, plus

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<sup>36</sup> MIM, 668; Bennet Weldon, *Chronological Notes, Containing the Rise, Growth and Present State of the English Congregation of the Order of St. Benedict* (London: J. Hodges, 1881), 90–1, 120–22.

<sup>37</sup> Weldon, *Chronological Notes*, 79–81.

<sup>38</sup> MIM, 449, 320; Ampleforth Abbey Archives, Peter Athanasius Allanson, "Biographies" (unpublished).

<sup>39</sup> MIM, 363; Silos Papers, xix, 198, printed in CRS 33, 266–73 (271); Weldon, *Chronological Notes*, 91, 128, 179.

<sup>40</sup> Weldon, *Chronological Notes*, 128.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas M. McCoog, SJ, "Spoils of War?: The Edict of Restitution and Benefactions to the English Province of the Society of Jesus," in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange Between England and Mainland Europe*, ed. Kelly and Thomas, 186–209 (197–201). For the English abbey at Lamspringe, see Anselm Cramer, ed., *Lamspringe: An English Abbey in Germany* (Ampleforth: Ampleforth Abbey Press, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> Mícheál Mac Craith, "The Irish Franciscan Continental Colleges and the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception," in *Rome and Irish Catholicism in the Atlantic World, 1622–1908*, ed. Matteo Binasco (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 137–65 (155–57).

those from the peripheries seemingly had a reputation as being standard-bearers of Catholic reform. They even found their way to helping out local Inquisitions, such as in Spain, where English Jesuits linked to the English College in Valladolid helped vet books, especially works in English.<sup>43</sup>

Turning to the female side and the English convents in mainland Europe, this enterprise is unmatched in the Early Modern period. During the years of proscription in their homeland, 22 English convents were established in mainland Europe, as well as one survivor from the pre-Reformation period, not to mention a series of houses established by the unenclosed followers of Mary Ward.<sup>44</sup> As with the monks, the exile nuns were committed to the rules of Catholic Europe as laid out in the decrees of the Council of Trent. For example, the Rule copied by Prioress Anne Worsley in the first half of the seventeenth century for use at the Antwerp and later the Lierre Carmelite convents expressly mentioned the Tridentine decree that limited the size of convents, and heeded the pronouncements against overcrowding and extreme poverty.<sup>45</sup> Around the middle of the seventeenth century, the Rouen Poor Clares drafted a letter to “show that is not against the Counsel of Trent to have the holy Sacrament in our Quire,” to answer a question posed to the abbess.<sup>46</sup> By the late 1660s, the Louvain Augustinians, in a series of ordinances made by the convent council to ensure the community’s statutes were properly followed, reinforced the rule that no nun should speak alone to a visitor at the grate, except the “Extraordinary Confessour whoe is licensed to heare confessions at the cloyster 2 or 3 tymes a yeare according to the Holy Councell of Trent.”<sup>47</sup> Taking the implementation of enclosure as a recognized marker of Tridentine practice, it is remarkable just how committed English women religious were to this decree.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the English nuns’ zeal for enclosure was so great that they quickly became renowned for it. For example, following her election as prioress of St Ursula’s, Louvain, in 1570, the first thing Margaret Clement sought to reform in the convent, “was to bring in inclosure, which had never benn well kept, before her time.”<sup>49</sup> This she did only seven years after the decree by the Council of Trent, underlining just how seriously this Englishwoman was taking the regulations. The commitment to enclosure displayed by English women religious could also be spread as a form of missionary activity. In the early 1640s, the abbess of the Cambrai Benedictines, Catherine Gascoigne, was asked by the Archbishop of Cambrai, Henri-François van der Burch, to reform “the Religious Dames of S Lazars” in Cambrai; her reputation for discipline having gone before her, this she did “to the spirituall profet of those Religious, reducing them to the happy estate of inclosure with the stricte observance of our holy Rule & al Regular discipline”.<sup>50</sup> In 1655, requiring a new permanent residence, the Canonesses of the

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<sup>43</sup> Ana Sáez Hidalgo, “‘Extravagant’ English Books at the Library of El Escorial and Jesuit Agency,” in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange Between England and Mainland Europe*, ed. Kelly and Thomas, 155–85.

<sup>44</sup> For an overview, see James E. Kelly, *English Convents in Catholic Europe, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>45</sup> Nicky Hallett, *Lives of Spirit: English Carmelite Self-Writing of the Early Modern Period* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 245.

<sup>46</sup> Caroline Bowden, “History Writing,” vol. 1, *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800*, gen. ed. Caroline Bowden, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 373.

<sup>47</sup> James E. Kelly, “Convent Management,” vol. 5, *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800*, gen. ed. Caroline Bowden, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 376.

<sup>48</sup> The following paragraph is drawn from a much longer treatment of the subject in Kelly, *English Convents in Catholic Europe*, Chapter 2.

<sup>49</sup> Nicky Hallett, “Life Writing I,” vol. 3, *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800*, gen. ed. Caroline Bowden, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 16.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph S. Hansom, ed., “The English Benedictines of the convent of our Blessed Lady of Good Hope in Paris, now St. Benedict’s Priory, Colwich, Staffordshire,” in *Miscellanea VII*, CRS, vol. 9 (1911), 366. The community was apparently a Benedictine one. This did not mean that English women religious neglected their role as part of

Holy Sepulchre in Liège were granted a house belonging to a small local community of women religious, whose life was not considered as exemplary in comparison to that of the English community.<sup>51</sup>

Equally, far from the sealed-away women of anti-Catholic literature, English women religious had experience of the wider Catholic Reformation. In 1619, the first English Carmelite convent was solemnly dedicated in Antwerp. Like the other early English convents, it was initially home to English women who had experience of “local” convents in mainland Europe: the first prioress, Anne Worlsey, had been professed at Mons, as had another of the founding community, Frances Ward, who had also spent six years as sub-prioress at a Carmelite convent in Kraków.<sup>52</sup> From Antwerp were founded a number of other Carmelite houses, including the English communities at Lierre and Hoogstraten. From Hoogstraten would be founded the first English-speaking convent in America, that of Port Tobacco in Maryland in 1790. However, underlining their role as members of an international order and Church, Carmels which were not specifically English were also founded from Antwerp in locations as diverse as Bois-le-Duc, Bruges, Cologne, Alost and Düsseldorf.

In conclusion, it was the people – male and female – in these foundations in mainland Europe that conveyed the Catholic Reformation to England, whether through pastoral activity, the written apostolate (including letter-writing) or schooling youngsters who would return to their homeland and raise their own Catholic families. However, they were not only English exiles; they balanced this identity with being committed and active members of the wider Catholic Reformation and Church Militant. Moreover, as far as England and the Catholic Reformation is concerned, this relationship was not just the traditional historiographical image of English Catholicism receiving the Tridentine reforms, but rather English Catholics were actually engaging with, giving to and leading some aspects of that global initiative. On the peripheries England may have been, but it was a vital part of the Catholic Reformation.

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the English mission: see, for example, Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *English Benedictine Nuns in Exile in the Seventeenth Century: Living Spirituality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 101–35.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Trappes-Lomax, ed., “Records of the English Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre of Liège, now at New Hall, 1652–1793,” in *Miscellanea X*, CRS, vol. 17 (1915), 104–5.

<sup>52</sup> WWTN, AC140, AC132; Mark A. Tierney, *Dodd’s Church History of England from the Commencement of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the Revolution in 1688*, vol. 4 (London: Charles Dolman, 1842), 112–15.